

## Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



University School  
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<http://www.etsu.edu/coe/uschool>



### A Comprehensive Recycling Program is Established

#### The Member

East Tennessee State University School is committed to an integrated curriculum emphasizing mathematics and science, preparing students to succeed in a technologically oriented, global society. University School is a public school with approximately 540 students and 54 faculty members. It is part of the Washington County school system, serving as a K-12 laboratory school for ETSU's Clemmer College of Education. In fall 2007, the faculty, staff, and students of University School adopted the following environmental policy statement: "University School is committed to the advancement of natural resource and environmental stewardship in both our school and global communities."

#### The Story

For about 15 years, some form of recycling has occurred at the University School, mostly dependent on teachers who were personally interested in the environment. Aluminum cans were the focus of previous off-and-on recycling efforts. However, these efforts did not effectively alleviate the large footprint our school was leaving on our earth. Because of increased awareness, the school set out to create a comprehensive school-wide recycling program including aluminum cans, plastic, paper, cardboard, printer cartridges, and cafeteria scraps. We also added a strong environmental education component that, in accordance with our mission, integrates science and mathematics.

We have added over 40 paper-recycling containers in every classroom and office. Our three main floors now have one or more large recycling bins for aluminum cans and plastic in the hallways. There are additional aluminum and plastic bins located in our cafeteria. We have added large plastic, aluminum and paper bins outside. We have also designated a location for faculty and students to take broken down cardboard. We have arranged with ETSU Physical Plant to pick up our paper once a week and our cardboard, aluminum and plastic bi-weekly.

We now recycle all of the school's printer ink cartridges. These cartridges are refilled at a local business. We also have a printer cartridge-recycling bin in our administrative office that our students contribute to from their home printers. These are sent to Cartridge World and the proceeds go back into our green school account for future green projects.

University School also has set up a large composting bin, and we compost all biodegradable material that is generated in our cafeteria. We have indoor composting bins that students empty each day. The outdoor bins are turned each day by students from our composting exploratory class. This group of students has also educated our faculty and staff on what they should and should not put in our bins. ETSU physical plant is currently working with us to build a raised bed garden in which to use the compost. Students will learn by tending the garden.

#### The Success

University School has become united in its mission to become stewards of our earth. We have established environmental exploratory classes for the elementary and middle school students that focus on waste reduction. Our high school ecology class has a stronger focus on environmental stewardship, and our Student Government Association is involved in our ecological efforts. Our students have taken a variety of field trips including a visit to a composting garden, a local recycling center and the local landfill. As a result, many of our recycling processes have been planned and initiated by students. A group of students created a school environmental website that tracks some of our school efforts. This can be viewed at:

[www.etsu.edu/coe/uschool/facstaff/green\\_school/default.asp](http://www.etsu.edu/coe/uschool/facstaff/green_school/default.asp)

In addition, our recycling efforts were highlighted in an article on the front page of the Johnson City Press on October 22, 2007, as well as in the Kingsport Times News. This type of attention is important in order to raise awareness in our community.

#### The Pollution Prevented

University School considers the pollution that it prevents to be the measure of its successes. We have recently developed the ability to measure some of our recyclables. In an eight-week period we recycled 22.5 pounds of aluminum and 113.5 pounds of plastic. In a typical week we recycle over 300 pounds of paper and 50 cubic yards of cardboard.

This data shows we are having a significant direct impact on our environment. However, the indirect impact through influencing the lives of our students is immeasurable and will ultimately be what protects our earth for many generations to come.

**May 2008**